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COPY NO. 9CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
23 July 1953COMMENT ON PRAVDA'S REJECTION OF WESTERN TERMS FOR
A FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE

A 22 July Pravda editorial, highly critical of the Tripartite Washington Conference decisions, indicated that the Soviet Union will not agree to a meeting of the four foreign ministers on Western terms. Stating that "under certain conditions" such a conference could have positive significance, Pravda condemned the Western communique of 14 July as having motives "which have nothing to do with furthering peace or with the tasks of reducing international tensions."

The familiar Soviet effort to foster dissension in the West was visible in the allegation that under American pressure the United Kingdom and France retreated from the type of conference suggested by "the proposal previously made by Churchill and supported by public opinion." The editorial repeated earlier Soviet allegations that the United States does not really desire a four-power conference, but was forced to yield to world opinion.

In line with recent Soviet propaganda rejecting "pre-conditions" for an international conference, Pravda charged that the representatives of the three Western powers had conspired to impose on a subsequent quadripartite conference both its "time and agenda." A strong suggestion that the USSR prefers a loosely organized four-power conference which it could use as a propaganda forum is noted in the editorial's complaint that the Washington communique represented an effort to narrow the task of the quadripartite conference by limiting it to certain questions pertaining to Germany and Austria.

The specific Pravda comments on Germany followed the standard propaganda line. No original ideas were advanced which would suggest changes in either Moscow's propaganda or its policy on Germany. Pravda's reiteration of threadbare arguments reveals Moscow's consciousness of the weakness of its present position in Germany.

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Pravda objected to the unwillingness of the Western powers to discuss the general question of German unification and a peace treaty. Instead, as in their note of 23 September 1952, they have attempted, it was alleged "to hopelessly narrow down the German problem, boiling everything down to the holding of all-German elections, which the Western powers plan to submit to their control, while at the same time giving a free hand to all reactionary and even fascist elements throughout Germany."

This Soviet stand reflects the same differences evident in past notes exchanged between the USSR and the Western powers, and indicates that the USSR is not yet prepared to meet Western demands for free elections. Pravda accused the West of suggesting talks on elections "only in order to delay the solution of problems about a peace treaty for Germany and about the unification of the German people into a single state."

Continued Soviet sensitivity to Western defense plans was underlined by the attacks on EDC and the Western attempts to include Germany in it. Pravda cited with approval an article by British Laborite Crossman which claimed that Secretary Dulles was trying to insure the failure of a conference by insisting on the inclusion of a rearmed Germany in a Western alliance.

The Foreign Ministers' communique was pictured as designed not to bring closer a solution of the German problem but to maintain Adenauer in power and, in alliance with him, to tie West Germany to the aggressive aims of EDC. The editorial commented on the coming West German election with the prediction that the trend of public opinion against Adenauer and his "fascist revanchist clique" may mean that his days in power are already numbered.

Pravda did not state a positive Soviet policy on Germany, but only reiterated familiar attacks on alleged Western plans. This familiar review of the Soviet position suggests that if Moscow agrees at all to a four-power conference, it will demand talks on the entire question of a German peace treaty rather than merely on the question of free elections.

Austria was virtually ignored in the editorial, reflecting probably both the Soviet belief that this issue is completely subsidiary to the German question and the weakness of its bargaining position on Austria. The USSR may also anticipate further gains from bilateral talks with the Austrian government.

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While the main emphasis of the editorial was focused on the Western call for a four-power conference on Germany and Austria, its discussion of Far Eastern questions employed the same technique of attempting to exploit and magnify differences among the three Western powers.

Pravda's brief reference to Korea reiterated the established propaganda line that Rhee is subject to the control of the "American military" and that the United States is fully responsible for his actions. Pravda argued that under strong American pressure, the British and French representatives were compelled to abandon their reservations concerning American policy toward Rhee and agreed to support him "should he think it worth his while to hinder the armistice and to launch a new adventure."

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